DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 475 397 CE 084 807

TITLE	Profiles of Excellence in Business and Education Leadership.
INSTITUTION	National Alliance of Business, Inc., Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	2002-11-05
NOTE	13p.; Remarks presented by Edward B. Rust, Jr. on "Corporate Leadership in Improving Student Achievement" and by Mark R. Warner on "State Policies for Education Excellence" at the Business and Education Conference (New York, NY, November 5, 2002).
PUB TYPE	Opinion Papers (120) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; *Corporations; Educational Change; Educational Improvement; Educational Planning; *Educational Quality; Internship Programs; *Leadership; Lifelong Learning; Mentors; Minority Groups; Older Adults; *Partnerships in Education; Postsecondary Education; *School Business Relationship; Secondary Education; Service Learning; State Legislation; State Regulation; *Statewide Planning
IDENTIFIERS	Business Role; *Government Business Cooperation; Illinois; Virginia

ABSTRACT

This document contains two papers on excellence in business and education leadership. "Corporate Leadership in Improving Student Achievement" (Edward B. Rust, Jr.) explains why business must remain involved in education and discusses the following efforts of the State Farm Insurance Company to assume a leadership role in educational reform: hosting a series of meetings on teacher quality throughout Illinois; establishing a program through which State Farm employees volunteer as substitute teachers; working to promote service learning; and providing leadership training and mentoring. "State Policies for Education Excellence" (Mark R. Warner) presents an overview of existing and proposed state policies for achieving educational excellence in Virginia. The following programs are highlighted: (1) SeniorNavigator.com, which is an online program that helps Virginia's senior citizens and their families, caregivers, and others to obtain answers to medical questions, locate senior health services, and connect with other senior citizens in their communities; (2) TechRiders, which has provided free computer training to more than 15,000 participants; (3) the Virginia High-Tech Partnership, which encourages black students to pursue technology careers by providing summer internship and job placement programs; (4) the Virginia Career Education Foundation; and (5) Virginia's Partnership for Achieving Successful Schools. (MN)

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NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF BUSINESS

National Center for Educational Accountability

Profiles of Excellence in Business and Education Leadership

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Corporate Leadership in Improving Student Achievement

Remarks by Edward B. Rust, Jr.
Chairman and CEO, State Farm Insurance Companies
Receiving the National Alliance of Business 2002 Distinguished Performance Award for Company of the Year

State Policies for Education Excellence

Remarks by the Honorable Mark R. Warner
Governor of the State of Virginia
Receiving the National Alliance of Business 2002 Distinguished Performance Award for State of the Year

Presented at the 2002 Business and Education Conference
November 5, 2002, New York, New York

CE 084 807

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Profiles of Excellence in Business and Education Leadership *is a speech series, produced by the National Alliance of Business, which profiles the creative ideas and best thinking of today's top leaders. This issue highlights the addresses given by* ***Edward B. Rust, Jr., chairman and CEO, State Farm Insurance Companies****, as he accepted the National Alliance of Business' 2002 Company of the Year Distinguished Performance Award, and by* ***Mark R. Warner, Governor of Virginia****, as he accepted the NAB 2002 State of the Year Distinguished Performance Award. Both speeches were delivered in November 2002.*

The National Alliance of Business' annual Distinguished Performance Awards recognize individuals, businesses, and organizations whose long-term commitment, innovation, and accomplishments have resulted in improving education and workforce quality.

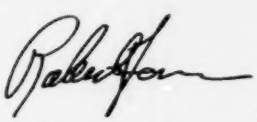
You will see the challenge in these pages by Edward B. Rust, Jr., chairman and CEO of State Farm Insurance Companies, to business leaders and educators for continuous improvement in American education, so that all children are provided with the skills necessary to succeed in an increasingly complex society and world economy. You will see how Governor Mark Warner of Virginia has pursued education excellence as a public priority for the citizens he serves. He shows how he cultivates unique supports in partnership with business.

These leaders articulate their vision about the central role that education plays in providing opportunity for all children to achieve their hopes for success. They have brought together women and men of skill and motivation to apply their talents and collaborate on improving public education systems in their communities.

Their individual efforts, by their own admission, are a beginning. The greater part of the challenge remains before us whether in business, government, education, or as parents.

Providing a world-class education is central to our responsibility for shaping the future for our children and for the security of our nation. The shared vision of the National Alliance of Business (NAB) and the National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA) focuses on the critical importance of achieving educational excellence in our schools. These organizations are being merged under the National Center for Educational Accountability. This united effort will continue to have the broad support of the nation's business leaders, philanthropic foundations, and public policy makers. We are proud to carry on the traditions of both organizations under a single banner.

Both award winners featured in these speeches will continue to provide guidance to NCEA. We hope you find this publication informative and thought provoking.



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Edward B. Rust, Jr.
Chairman and CEO
State Farm Insurance Companies

Corporate Leadership in Improving Student Achievement

Remarks by Edward B. Rust, Jr.

I accept the Distinguished Performance Award for Company of the Year on behalf of approximately 96,000 State Farm agents and employees across the country. This award is a reflection of their good work and continuing collaboration with state and local business and education groups' – work that is focused on helping develop strategies to assure that each and every child in America has the opportunity to receive an education that will prepare them for their future.

In a few minutes, I'll share some of the ways State Farm has found to be involved in education. But first, I want to share some general thoughts on the reasons behind business involvement in education and why it's critical that, now more than ever, we stay at the table.

Historically, public education has brought our nation tremendous social and economic benefits. Unfortunately, we find ourselves today challenged by an education system that, too often, impedes rather than fosters economic growth.

The U.S. Commission on National Security issued a special report in 2001 before the events of September 11th. This report read, in part: "The word 'crisis' is much overused, but it is entirely appropriate here. If the United States does not stop and reverse negative educational trends – the general teacher shortage, and the downward spiral in science and math education and performance – it will be unable to maintain its position of global leadership over the next quarter century."

We find ourselves today challenged by an education system that, too often, impedes rather than fosters economic growth.

For me... for my associates at State Farm...and for many seated in this room today, this message was neither new nor the beginning of our interest in collaboration with the education community. But the message served to remind us we have a lot of work left to do.

Last year, we saw landmark bipartisan legislation passed – with significant involvement of key business groups and leaders. State business-education coalitions are hard at work collaborating on the strategies necessary to implement this legislation at the state level. As my good friend, Governor Jim Hunt will readily tell you, a key part to progress in education reform in North Carolina was when the business community, along with others, made improving the quality of schools a legislative priority... and kept it on the front burner despite the short attention span of many legislators.

Unfortunately, while the need for community understanding and support of education reform has never been greater, questions have been raised about the viability of continuing business-education partnerships. In some cases, the credibility of business leaders has been rightfully questioned. A Harris poll in July showed just 16 percent of parents want their children to become CEOs. The resulting implication is obvious; the public questions the ability of business to lead, our honesty in doing so, and our intentions.

At the same time, economic realities have forced many in business to rethink philanthropic efforts. Decisions on partnerships and support now require measures to determine if, in fact, invested money and human resources are making a difference. At the end of the day, each week, each month – are kids achieving at a higher level than at the start? Asking for measurable results isn't an approach that always sets well with education organizations – or in some instances, with some of our own employees.

The philanthropic rules of partnership have changed from what can best be described as "checkbook philanthropy" – a time where we wrote a check, hoped it did some good and then waited until the next cycle to do it all over again – to requests of our education partners for the results of collaborative projects supported by business involvement. The expectation has changed to one where results are outlined in measurable terms with decisions made based on the data retrieved from such measures. It's a significant change in the partnerships between business and education. But I believe a good change.

I often use as an example the fact that this time of year, most of you can tell how well your school's football or soccer team fared during the fall season. Your team may be in the playoffs. But how do math students in our local high school compare against math students at another school elsewhere in the state, the country or internationally? Could many of us in this room answer the question? I daresay too many of us would find it a challenge to apply the same measures of competitive achievement towards academics that we do to athletics.

So how do we turn this great big ship called "public school education" and head it toward the future?

Planning for the future is a critical part of business strategy.

How does the business community provide leadership to improve student achievement? Let me share a couple of ways I think business can provide critical leadership in education partnerships.

In the book, *The Leadership Challenge*, James M. Kouzes & Barry Posner said, "A vision is a point on a horizon that will be reached only at some date in the future, a statement of what will be created years or decades ahead. To create visions, leaders must become preoccupied with the future. They must be able to project themselves ahead in time."

The business community understands the need for visionary leadership. Planning for the future is a critical part of business strategy and we know that, plain and simple, businesses need qualified workers and a strong economy to support our interests and that the global economy has changed the landscape. Statistics tell us that nearly 70 percent of U.S. companies can't recruit enough skilled employees to meet their needs and in many cases, the increasing scarcity of skilled employees poses an obstacle to corporate growth.

On the other hand, by design, our education system focuses more on the "here and now." For the average teacher, his or her energy has been channeled towards teaching their students with little defined accountability for the academic achievement of each child. The focus is to move through the subject material appropriate for their classroom of children.

The culture has never asked for, nor provided, many opportunities for teachers to think about curriculum in prior or succeeding years. It's a relatively recent development that we have learning standards to publicly identify what students are expected to master and by what grade level

Business leaders have historically been very good at complaining about new employees who entered the workforce less prepared than business needs required. Often, the blame was placed on educators. However, business often failed to work with schools to communicate the skill sets required for entry-level employees today and expected in the future. As a result, educators were presented with a moving target and they often didn't have the insight necessary to hit it successfully.

At State Farm, we believe that part of being a good leader is listening, and that applies to our education partnerships as well. We've made it our business to listen to

what educators tell us they need. Surprising to some, it's not always "just money." Money is certainly part of the equation to education reform. Resource allocation has to be addressed when we know a significant number of schools will be facing a budget deficit this year. In my home state of Illinois, 8 out of 10 school districts will be operating in the red this year and that directly impacts teaching and learning.

But educators are telling us that they need more than just financial resources if they are going to truly leave "no child behind." Let me give you an example of a new State Farm partnership that was the direct result of "leading by listening first."

Last year, we partnered with the Illinois Governor's office and hosted a series of meetings around the state on teacher quality. These facilitated discussions with educators, legislators, business and community leaders were based upon the landmark report Investing in Teaching, created by the National Alliance of Business in partnership with The Business Roundtable, the Chamber and the National Association of Manufacturers. At each meeting, we heard one thing over and over again – the need for meaningful professional development – and the lack of resources in education to make this happen.

So we created a partnership with our local educators where State Farm employees could volunteer as substitute teachers to schools when they needed a substitute to cover for a teacher engaged in professional development. Through S.L.A.T.E., the State Farm Learning and Teaching Exchange, our associates become certified by the State of Illinois as substitute teachers. Then, we match them up with schools and teachers engaged in meaningful professional development. To date, we have over 400 State Farm corporate headquarters associates certified. Over 100 classroom teachers have already had a S.L.A.T.E. substitute teach their class and we have close to 200 of our folks scheduled to substitute in a classroom over the next several months.

We're rolling out this program throughout the country with one goal in mind – to "walk the walk" that lifelong learning is essential. Teachers need the time to update their skills and to learn from each other. Through S.L.A.T.E., we've removed two of the hurdles teachers and administrators told us affected the ability to engage in professional development: the cost for hiring substitutes and the availability of substitutes in the first place.

An added benefit I've found is the energy and enthusiasm in my organization that has been mobilized through this program. Many of our associates are former teachers or have a teacher in their family. One young lady is actually scheduled to substitute in her mother's classroom next week – so her mother can participate in a professional development opportunity. Our folks want to make a difference, they want to be involved in a meaningful way and S.L.A.T.E. has provided them the opportunity to get involved.

Realizing the goal of "No Child Left Behind" requires more than just learning standards and professional development of teachers, State Farm also supports efforts to improve readiness to learn by working with the Committee for Economic Development on preschool needs and improvements.

We're heavily involved in efforts and partnerships that promote service-learning in communities across the country and we have been part of NAB's Baldrige in Education initiative in several states. More recently, we are following the work of the Business Higher-Education Forum to consider how colleges and universities are using technology to transform the learning experience. We're also heavily involved at the local level in Junior Achievement and finding ways to connect our associates – whether it is through leadership training or mentoring relationships with young people. All of these programs are open to other business partners as well, and we would be happy to share our experiences with all who are interested.

With this conference, an important business practice is being modeled – the ability to consolidate services and abilities to be more effective. This conference is an example of how to leverage the resources of multiple organizations to build effectiveness. The combined strengths of the National Alliance of Business and the Conference Board created a partnership that built on the best each organization had to offer.

As leaders, we continue to learn as well. One thing we've learned is that there are finite resources – both financial and human – to do all the good work we'd like to do in this arena. So, with this conference, we acknowledge a change in the role and the existence of NAB as a separate entity.

For over 35 years, the National Alliance of Business has been a leader in business-education partnerships as well as the leader in the corporate community's efforts to increase achievement at all levels of learning. NAB provides guidance to a growing network of state and local business coalitions and were critical to the passage of the "No Child Left Behind" legislation. Serving over 5,000 members, NAB has been a model for building the processes and measures that have helped drive improvements in our education system. Their focus on educating the business community about education needs and helping educators understand the skills that graduates must possess to be successful in the workplace has been invaluable.

Today, in great part because of the significant work done by NAB, there are fewer issues to be tackled by the business community independently. For this reason, the National Alliance of Business has made a tactical decision to join with a newer organization, the National Center for Educational Accountability, and to merge the efforts of the two organizations.

The NCEA brings together leaders from business and education and national policy experts. With this collaboration, we demonstrate the value in sharing best practices, in not duplicating services and in continuing to provide the leadership that is most needed by the audience we wish to affect. In this case, the work of the National Center will be based on the need of the education community to develop data-driven accountability systems that will enable educators to make the necessary comparisons and to learn from one another.

Management expert Warren G. Bennis reminds us that "Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality." We have the vision of educating each and every one of our children – regardless of ethnicity or economic status- to prepare then for the challenges of life and work in the 21st century. This will take collaboration, dedication and a resolve to maximize all of our efforts. This means the business community also has to fine-tune our abilities and strengths and use them wisely.

Business organizations are working in concert with the educational community to refocus core curricula, provide additional development and ongoing education for teachers and redirect the educational system towards a proven results oriented agenda. I challenge you to be part of the solution – to assume an activist role in working to effect the changes necessary to truly restore our educational system to world-class status.

It all comes down to one thing – the children. When you look into the eyes of a child and know that he or she is receiving the education that will help them achieve throughout their lifetime. When you can see the sparkle of enthusiasm and the potential we need to encourage. That's the real reason business should be involved in education. Because of the children.

Thank you.

Mark R. Warner
Governor of Virginia

State Policies for Education Excellence

Remarks by the Honorable Mark R. Warner

Good morning. Ed, thank you for your kind introduction.

It is truly an honor for me to receive this award from the National Alliance of Business on behalf of all of the hard working educators in Virginia.

I am equally pleased to be joined today by Mike Anzilotti. Mike is the CEO of First Virginia Bank and the President of the Virginia Chamber of Commerce. Our successes in Virginia have everything to do with the partnerships between our public schools and the members of his organizations. I am delighted that Mike could join us today.

If you talk to Ed, Bob Jones or Aimee Guidera they will tell you that there was a brief hesitation as to whether I would be able to attend this award presentation. My well-intentioned staff argued that I needed to be in Virginia on Election Day. I did make sure to vote this morning at 7am, but I insisted on being here today.

Today in Virginia, voters will decide on four major referenda that I've been promoting aggressively.

It is essential for Virginia to adequately address the education needs of the future workforce. Investment in the college and university infrastructure is the first step.

Voters in our two most populous regions – the Washington DC suburbs of Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads region near our port on the Chesapeake Bay – will be asked whether they support raising their sales tax to finance transportation improvements.

In addition, voters statewide will be asked to approve issuing two sets of bonds – $900 million for higher education and museums, and $119 million for parks and natural areas.

Over the next decade, an additional 32,000 qualified high school graduates are expected to enroll at our colleges, universities, and community colleges. That's on top of the 325,000 students these institutions now serve. It is essential for Virginia to adequately address the education needs of the future workforce. Investment in the college and university infrastructure is the first step.

The higher education effort is particularly important to me, because I've seen personally the opportunities that come from a college education.

I grew up in a middle-class family where I learned the value of hard work, faith and family, and the importance of education. I was the first member in my family to graduate from college. I graduated from George Washington in 1977 and went on to earn a law degree from Harvard. But instead of practicing law, I followed a different passion – business.

In business, I came to understand the government works best when it works in partnership with the private sector. As a businessman – and before winning elective office – I worked to create partnerships to address the needs of our community. We created the Virginia Health Care Foundation, which has provided health care to more than 425,000 underserved Virginian in rural and urban areas.

Through the Virginia Health Care Foundation, we were able to launch SeniorNavigator.com, an online program that helps Virginia senior citizens and their families, caregivers, churches and community groups use the internet to find answers to medical questions, locate senior health services, and connect with other senior citizens in their communities.

When we saw too many people falling on the wrong side of the digital divide, we started Techriders. Based in Virginia's houses of worship, TechRiders has brought free computer training to more than 15,000 participants.

To help open doors to technology jobs, we started the Virginia High-Tech Partnership.

It helps students from Virginia's five Historically Black Colleges and Universities pursue technology careers through a summer internship and job placement program. After five years, more than 125 companies participate in our annual job fair, providing internships and jobs.

Now in part because Virginia businesses have been involved so extensively in our public schools, the facts tell the story of our successes.

- Virginia ranks first in the South and tenth in the nation in the percentage of students taking the SAT.
- Virginia is one of just three states recognized by the National Education Goals Panel for leading the nation in the increase in the number of students qualifying for college credit on Advanced Placement examinations.
- And gains made by Virginia students on the 2000 National Assessment of Educational Progress mathematics tests are among the highest in the nation.
- The achievement of African-American students improved on 22 of 28 Standards of Learning test administered during the spring of 2002 when compared with results from the previous year. Sixty-four percent of African-American students who took the Algebra I test in spring 2002 passed, compared with 59 percent in 2001 and 20 percent in 1998.

I'm particularly proud that Virginia recently received a $13.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Despite our current economic challenges, this grant will enable the Commonwealth to enhance the teaching profession.

These funds will allow us to provide incentives for good teachers to stay in the profession, and to help recruit good, new teachers who will stay and teach in their own communities.

This grant is a good start, but we still need to think of additional creative public-private partnership opportunities to retain quality teachers, particularly in underserved rural and urban schools.

All of these successes are due to many things, from the quality of our teachers to the hard work of our young people.

They are also due in part to the standards-based reforms that Virginia launched seven years ago.

The Standards of Learning program lays out very clearly what students are expected to learn in each grade, and it includes a series of tests to measure achievement.

Since then, we have seen a tremendous increase in student achievement, as measured by SOL tests, the Stanford 9, and others.

Because Virginia was one of the first states in the country to undertake standards-based reform, today we are ahead of other states in raising student achievement.

With the continued economic downturn, Virginia remains committed to our excellent public schools that generate the highly-trained workforce we need.

With the continued economic downturn, Virginia remains committed to our excellent public schools that generate the highly-trained workforce we need.

But tough fiscal times remind us of the lesson I mentioned earlier – government works best when it works in partnership with the private sector.

Everyone in this room knows that government is not the only one facing tough fiscal times. I know that many of you saw last month's *USA Today* article about declining corporate support for public education.

The article pointed out that in the 1990s, many businesses saw themselves as important components of education reform, and they worked hard to bring basic business principles like accountability to public schools.

But today for a variety of reasons, corporate partners all across the country are pulling back in their support for public education.

In Virginia, we are continuing to press forward with new education partnerships. Let me highlight two in particular that we launched this summer:

Virginia Career Education Foundation

In September, we created the Virginia Career Education Foundation to seek new ways to promote vocational education in public schools.

I've long believed that it's important to start valuing our plumbers and electricians as much as we value doctors and lawyers.

The Foundation will work to stimulate greater input from the business community, increase the collaboration between business and the education community, and promote and expand the most successful programs throughout the Commonwealth.

We modeled it after the successful Virginia Health Care Foundation. Its goal will be to raise funds from private sources and work statewide to promote partnerships to increase the number of students graduating from high school who are qualified and interested in pursuing further technical education and jobs.

One of our goals is to supplement and enhance the work of organizations that are already in place. We want to work with partnerships that are already working in communities – like the Cisco Networking Academies that are working to help high school students achieve industry-recognized computer networking credentials.

I expect the Virginia Career Education Foundation will play an important role in closing the gap between the skills required in today's workplace and the capability of our workforce.

Partnership for Achieving Successful Schools

The partnership that has gotten the most attention is PASS – our Partnership for Achieving Successful Schools.

PASS came about because of an issue that has been eating at me for a long time now. When I was running for Governor, people used to ask me, "What do you think about the Standards of Learning? Should we keep it or get rid of it?"

The question always drove me crazy, because I never saw it as an either-or issue.

And the one thing that always stuck in the back of my mind was the critical dates that are looming.

In 2004, SOL scores will be a factor in determining whether students may graduate.

In 2007, whole schools could lose their accreditation if SOL scores do not improve.

And the big unresolved question is – What happens to individual students when those deadlines arrive?

That's a question still to be resolved. But it points to a larger issue. We simply cannot wait until those deadlines arrive and discover that some students have fallen behind. We have to act *now* to make sure that all students learn and achieve.

So in July, we announced creation of the PASS initiative.

PASS is a statewide partnership with business and community leaders, state educators, and local school and government officials to boost student achievement in Virginia's lowest academically performing schools.

It will assist more than 130 academically warned schools with a comprehensive plan to marshal community and business support. These schools will receive enhanced services from visiting academic review teams comprised of principals, teachers and retired educators.

Major components of the initiative are on-site assessments and support, hands-on training in strategies to address weaknesses, and peer partnerships between high-poverty and high-performing schools staff and colleagues facing the same challenges.

An important component of the PASS academic assistance teams is that the members come from schools with similar demographics that are achieving academic success.

So far, more than 100 business and community partners have signed on to support the 34 PASS Priority schools, and we're working right now to recruit partners for the 100-plus academically warned schools that are part of the overall PASS initiative.

Our PASS corporate and community sponsors include companies like Inova Health System, AOL Time Warner, Bank of America, the Virginia Education Association, and the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, to name just a few. They are the heart of the PASS program.

Conclusion

I'm proud of the work we're doing in Virginia. We are committed to life-long learning, and partnerships with the business community are an essential ingredient.

This award is about Virginia investing in our future. I am grateful to the National Alliance of Business.

Thanks again for the invitation to be with you today.

About the National Center for Educational Accountability and National Alliance of Business

For 35 years, the National Alliance of Business served the nation as the business organization focused solely on increasing student achievement and improving the competitiveness of the American workforce. Its central purpose was to increase individuals' skills and knowledge mastery by working with employers, educators, training providers, coalitions, and policymakers to align the learning opportunities at all levels of the education and training system with the increasing demands of the Knowledge Economy.

The National Alliance of Business (NAB) formally closed and merged with the National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA) in the fall of 2002 to bolster the quality of education for students and respond to states' needs as they move forward to implement standards and accountability in the nation's classrooms. The National Center for Educational Accountability, created in October 2001, is a joint venture of the Education Commission of the States, The University of Texas at Austin, and Just for the Kids, an Austin-based nonprofit organization. The Center's mission is to expand states' knowledge of how to use data to monitor, analyze, and improve student and school performance. The Center accomplishes its work through a combination of data analysis, investigation of best practice, research, policy analysis, and training.

The newly enhanced organization that ensures businesses and business-led coalitions throughout the country are provided the information and resources they need to expand their involvement in education reform, notably issues of accountability and best practices in standards-based reform.

New roles for NCEA now include:

- **Supporting business-led coalitions** working on education issues at the state and local level;
- **Aligning NCEA efforts** with other national business and education groups;
- **Providing information** to help states and business/education partnerships effectively implement the No Child Left Behind Act.

The new Washington-based arm of NCEA will become the center for providing information to national and state business coalitions on education reform issues.

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I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: Profiles of Excellence in Business and Education Leadership. Vol.6, 2003	
Author(s): Edward B. Rust, Jr., Gov. Mark R. Warner	
Corporate Source: National Center for Educational Accountability	Publication Date: March 2003

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